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SUBJECT: Tanzanian ECA Alumni Form Association

REF: STATE 4856

¶1. Summary: A core group of Tanzanian ECA alumni formed the nascent Tanzania U.S. State Alumni Association during a recent visit by AF Alumni Coordinator Mallory Kirsh. Alumni participation in Embassy programs and the State Alumni website is growing in Tanzania. Kirsh identified numerous best practices in our alumni engagement, and provided additional training on alumni outreach, the ECA Alumni Project Competition, and alumni outreach tools. End summary.

Best Practices identified in Dar es Salaam

¶2. During meetings with Public Affairs staff on alumni outreach, Kirsh identified several best practices in use, despite the absence of a dedicated alumni outreach staff position. Some of these include:

- Frequent participation of alumni in pre-departure orientations for Fulbright, Humphrey and Educational Advising students;
- Participation of alumni on selection panels for Fulbright and Humphrey candidate interviews;
- Seeking alumni to serve as hosts or partner institutions for IIP and Post-originated speakers;
- Seeking alumni as volunteer presenters during roundtable discussions, book discussions and lectures;
- Seeking alumni participation in cultural events in Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar and in other regions.
- Encouragement of unofficial mentoring of new applicants and nominees by returned alumni, which has improved applications and led to alumni working together on joint research projects.
- Encouragement of increased collaboration between alumni and their U.S. host institutions, including collaboration with American exchange alumni.
- Fostering cross-program mentoring. For example, an IVLP alumna from the traditionally nomadic Maasai tribe agreed to mentor a recently-selected Maasai Youth Exchange and Study (YES) student who will study in Iowa during the 2009-2010 academic year.
- Favoring alumni for Front Office engagement. The previous Ambassador's first event at the residence was a major alumni reception; his first meetings in Zanzibar were with IVLP alumni; and his first reception outside of Dar (in Arusha) was for alumni. We find the easiest way to welcome a new principal into the local environment is with the friendly and frank interaction alumni provide.
- When other officers, such as the Deputy Chief of Mission, Public Affairs Officer or Consul, travel regionally, PAS sets up programs and meetings and uses alumni as reliable go-betweens or meeting organizers.

Alumni Association Formation

¶3. Kirsh and PAS Cultural Affairs Assistant, Diana Carvalho, met a core group of alumni for a brainstorming session to discuss the creation of the alumni association after several attempts did not get off the ground. To assuage the groups concerns about busy alumni schedules, and the fact that alumni come from diverse sectors, we provided examples of how successful alumni associations

in Africa are organized, work, and have overcome similar challenges.

The five alumni then dedicated themselves to organize an all-ECA umbrella organization with different chapters and goals. This core alumni group has already agreed upon a draft constitution, a proposed name (TUSSAA - Tanzania U.S. State Alumni Association), and has established a founding committee. They set themselves a deadline of May 2009 to register the organization with the Tanzanian government as an official NGO.

¶4. We handed over the remaining funding from our last Alumni Grant to TUSSAA as start-up funding for payment of legal fees, registration, the acquisition of an Association phone and postal box, and opening a bank account. In addition, when the association is launched, the remaining money will be used to fund registration drives to create regional chapters. A State Alumni USB flash drive was provided to TUSSAA to keep all official association paperwork in order.

Reconnecting with "Lost" Alumni

¶5. During the Alumni Coordinator's visit, the Public Affairs Officer hosted a jazz reception featuring U.S. Navy band Top Brass at his residence. One of the members of the alumni association founding committee gave brief remarks about the founding of TUSSAA and encouraged all alumni present to involve themselves in this new association. We were able to reconnect with several alumni who attended the reception and help them to register for the State alumni website in follow-up communication.

¶6. Following the Alumni Coordinator's visit, we now regularly and more effectively use the DOS community on State Alumni to view best practices from other Missions, have increased reporting of new content about Tanzanian alumni activities into the Mission Activity Tracker (MAT), and can better use Alumni Archive resources. We also received useful training on alumni outreach through the ECA Alumni Project Competition. Kirsh praised Post efforts to increase the number of alumni activities, but suggested the creation of a central strategy to target alumni across programs, instead of each PAS staffer focusing only on the alumni of the program with which they work (Fulbright, IVLP, etc.).

¶7. We look forward to further collaboration with the Office of Alumni Affairs, including various opportunities laid out in reftel, particularly as TUSSAA moves from the beginning stages of association formation to creating a more unified outreach strategy for engaging Tanzanian alumni.

¶8. This is a joint cable between Embassy Dar es Salaam and ECA/P/A.

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